

Progressive Spiritual Knowledge

By Mark Hatfield

It is clear in the word of God that there is a way to make progress in spiritual knowledge. We know that before we become a Christian we need to hear the gospel to be saved. After obeying the gospel we feed on the milk of the word until we are ready for the meatier portions of God's word and know God better.

Paul shows us this progression in spiritual knowledge in Colossians 1:3-12:

"We give thanks to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and the love which you have for all the saints; because of the hope laid up for you in heaven, of which **you previously heard in the word of truth, the gospel which has come to you**, just as in all the world also it is constantly bearing fruit and increasing, even as {it has been doing} in you also since the day you heard {of it} and **understood the grace of God in truth; just as you learned {it}** from Epaphras, our beloved fellow bond-servant, who is a faithful servant of Christ on our behalf, and he also informed us of your love in the Spirit. For this reason also, since the day we heard {of it} we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be **filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding**, so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please {Him} in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and **increasing in the knowledge of God**; strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience; joyously giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in Light."

We begin with our ability to hear of how we are sinners of our need to be forgiven. The gospel tells us the good news of the Lord's coming to die for us and of our ability to find full pardon in Him. When we respond in trusting faith to the gospel through obedience, then we are saved and start a new life in Christ. From here we begin our journey to heaven.

Next, Paul tells these Christians that through the gospel they began to learn about the grace of God in truth. Grace is the simplest of truths to understand once you are convinced you are a sinner and now you have been forgiven. When God withholds His wrath that would lead to spiritual death and gives us life, we understand how grateful we should be to Him. Once we have received grace, we must seek to tell others of the grace of God. But teach the grace of God in truth. This means we need to show others the true way to receive God's grace and help them never to receive that grace in vain.

Now we note that after we have learned about grace we should seek to be filled with the knowledge of the will of God in all spiritual wisdom and understanding. A child of God always hungers for more of the word of God. We need to grow in the Lord through gaining a greater understanding of His will for our lives. We need to pray that we and others are filled in this way.

Finally, after hearing the gospel, receiving God's grace and seeking to know God's will for our lives, we need to know God. We develop a personal relationship with God that was first severed by sin, but from the time we are redeemed is ever growing closer and stronger until the day that we are brought into His presence forever. Where are you in the progression to spiritual knowledge?